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THE HONORABLE DARRELL ISSA

Tribute to LtGen. SAMUEL T. HELLAND

Friday, October 16, 2009

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the United States Marine Corps are exceptional.

Our country has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent to keep this country free and safe. United States Marine Lieutenant General Samuel T. Helland is one of these individuals.

Lt. General Helland earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Minnesota, Duluth and holds a Master of Science Degree from Troy State University. He is a graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the National Defense University, Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Lt. General Helland started his military career by enlisting in the Army in 1968. He served three years with the U.S. Army Special Forces, leaving after a combat tour of duty in Vietnam with the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN), Military Advisory Command (Special Observations Group). Lt. General Helland graduated from Marine Officer Candidate School in 1973, and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1974. He is qualified as a CH-53 pilot.

Lt. General Helland has served in many different capacities over the years; Lt. General Helland served with the Amphibious Units, Aviation Combat Elements, and Joint Task Forces. He has participated in exercises and contingency operations ranging from the Arctic Circle, throughout the Mediterranean and Caribbean Seas, the Persian Gulf, and the Horn of Africa.

His assignments include Staff Officer for the Logistics Officer for the Marine Aircraft Group 26, Operations Officer for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461, MAG 40, Joint Staff Officer in the J-7, Command of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Deputy Commander JTF-Shining Hope, US Joint Forces Command, Norfolk VA, US Marine Corps Forces South, Commanding General Fleet Marine Forces South, Assistant Deputy Commandant for Aviation. In May 2004, Lt. General Helland assumed command of Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa. From August 2005 to July 2007, Lt. General Helland commanded the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, MCAS Miramar San Diego, California. In July 2007, he assumed duty as Deputy Commanding General I MEF Camp Pendleton, CA before assuming his present assignment as Commanding General I MEF; Commander, Marine Corps Forces Central Command.

His decorations include the Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Defense Superior Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with gold star, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon with one star, and various service and unit awards.

Lt. General Helland's tireless passion for service has contributed to the betterment of this country. On the occasion of his retirement and on behalf of the people of the United States whom he has served with courage and honor, we commemorate the service of Lieutenant General Samuel T. Helland.